

Seeking Malfoy

by PonderingPotter

Category: Harry Potter

Genre: Family, Romance

Language: English

Characters: Albus S. P., Draco M., Harry P., Scorpius M.

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2016-04-14 07:12:06

Updated: 2016-04-21 19:01:55

Packaged: 2016-04-27 18:17:51

Rating: M

Chapters: 7

Words: 17,685

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Harry is called to Hogwarts to deal with his son after a fight with another student. It turns out that this student is Draco Malfoys son, and Harry is about to be seeing a lot more of them.

Features a lot of quidditch and a series of events that leads two old rivals to come together as friends, and maybe more, if their sons have anything to say about it.

1. Chapter 1

Harry had always thought that he was a good parent. He wasn't great, he didn't think, but he supposed he had done a fair enough job at raising three kids while balancing a career as an auror, and though he may be a little biased, he also maintained a firm belief that he had a set of pretty phenomenal children to prove it-which is why he was so surprised to see Ginny's head sticking out of the fireplace in the middle of the afternoon with news about Albus.

"What do you mean he's in the Headmistress's office?" Harry asked her, once he had calmed down from being startled off of the couch by the erupting flames that signaled her appearance. "He's only been in school a month!"

Ginny pursed her lips patiently, and said, "I told you, Harry, he's gotten in trouble for fighting with another student. McGonagall is insisting that she sees one of us in her office within the hour."

"I'm busy." Harry complained, and pointedly ignored her skeptically raised eyebrows, "Why can't you go and talk to her?"

"Harry, I'm training in Romania, I can't." Ginny sighed in exasperation, before informing him with a half-smile, "Besides, they're your kids when they've done something wrong."

Harry relaxed slightly at her tone, and said fondly, "You just don't

like to discipline him because you want to be the favorite."

"You know that's not it. If I wasn't training our newest chaser I would go. Besides, it will mean more if it's coming from you. You're his hero."

Harry's heart swelled at that, and he asked, "Do you know what he's been caught fighting with?"

Ginny's face twisted up a little with discomfort as she admitted, "Apparently there was an altercation with Malfoy's kid, and McGonagall seems to think we've pitted them against each other, and wants us to go set them straight-by _us_, I mean _you_, of course."

Harry sighed and said, "Yeah, alright, I'll floo up there in a minute-but if I find out Malfoy's son laid a hand on ours, then his father had better hope he's learned a good shield charm, because I'll hex his bollocks off."

Ginny rolled her eyes, but Harry didn't get a chance to make a comment on it before her head had disappeared from the fire, and he was left standing grumpily in the front room of Grimmauld place. _So much for cleaning the place up, then._

He very nearly flooed directly into McGonagall's office, but stopped himself when he looked down to see how embarrassingly dusty his shirt was. He apparated to his house instead, just a hill away from the burrow, and changed into clothing that looked a step above being casual. He wondered if he should dress formally to see his former head of house, and almost missed being married to Ginny so he could ask her what he should wear. He sighed instead, deciding that he was presentable enough, and sent a quick owl to Molly Weasley, letting her know that he wouldn't be home if she came by to drop Lily Luna off. He didn't think it would be a problem, as she had volunteered to watch his daughter for the entire day, but he felt better to let her know just in case.

XXXXXXXXXX

He was rather proud that he didn't trip out of the fireplace as he was deposited in McGonagall's office, as he hadn't flooed anywhere in ages. He was so caught up in his own relief that he didn't even notice the two boys slouching in the seats in front of McGonagall's desk until he was halfway across the room, brushing soot off of his sleeve vigorously. When he did see the two boys, he stopped in his tracks, anchored by his own surprise. Draco Malfoy's son was the mirror image of his father when he was eleven, and seeing him sat beside Albus, who is Harry's carbon copy aside from not needing glasses, puts his head more than a little off balance.

He takes a moment to let the image soak in, and his eyes rake over the pair in fascination as he wonders just how much Malfoy's kid acts like him, considering Albus is so much like Harry that it almost scares him at times. He takes a look at the blond boy's uniform, and before he can help himself he is snorting, amusement coloring his face. Draco _Malfoy's_ son is a _Hufflepuff_, of all things, and Harry nearly manages an actual laugh when someone says coldly behind him, "Something funny, Potter?"

Harry nearly jumped out of his skin, and whipped around to snap, "Merlin, Malfoy, warn a bloke before you sneak up on him like that!"

Malfoy raised an eyebrow in response, and answered casually, in a way that set Harry's nerves on fire as he grits his teeth, "I would have thought that, being an auror, you'd be better trained, Potter. Shall I tell your supervisor that your observational skills are just as abysmal as they were when we were in school?"

"I do hope this is friendly banter, boys." McGonagall cleared her throat in the doorway, and both of the men looked up sheepishly in answer. Their sons were glaring at each other and Harry can't help smirking a little, thinking that McGonagall will no-doubt be on his side, being a Gryffindor. She levels them both with a look, crosses the room, transfigures two seats out of paperweights on either side of the boys, and beckons Harry and Malfoy to sit as she slides up to her desk, ringed fingers crossed together. "I think we rather need to discuss some behavioral issues between your sons, wouldn't you agree?"

"_Potters_ son, you mean." Malfoy says defensively, and puts a hand on his son's arm. Harry hadn't managed to read the boys name on McGonagalls paperwork as he had rounded the desk to sit down_, _and was itching to know what it was.__

"I will send you out of the room if you can't behave like an adult, Mister Malfoy." McGonagall warns, and Harry and Albus both snorted amusedly into their chests, which Harry then flushes about when she turns sharply to him and says, "That goes for you too, Potter. You're grown ups, please try to act like it. Now, I'm assuming you both know why we are here?"

"Err, no." Harry admitted, flushing a little when Malfoy rolls his eyes as if to say 'typical'. Harry had made a face at him before he could stop himself.

"Potter, _what did I say?_" McGonagall warned sharply, her eyes cold and hard like steel, "We are here because your boys can't seem to keep from fighting in the halls and during meal times, and it's so closely mirrored to your own bantering in school that I can't help wondering if past experiences are responsible."

"With all due respect, ma'am, Scorpius has sent me letters on three different occasions detailing the poor treatment that _Potter's__boy_ has subjected him to. It hardly seems fair to discipline my son for this." Malfoy interjected arrogantly, pointed chin raised in the air defiantly.

"You _would _pick a pretentious name like that." Harry couldn't help scoffing.

"Yes, because _Albus_ is so much better, isn't it?"

Harry bristled at that, cheeks going somewhat red as his hands curled into fists, but he defended quickly, "Look, regardless of what you think, there is no way my son is responsible for any of this." He knows he should do it, but he adds anyways with a sneer, "If anything, _your_ kid is the bully here; after all, _like father, like son." _

McGonagall sighed loudly and said to the adults, "Mister Potter, please refrain from picking another fight, or I will have to request you leave the office."

Malfoy smirked, sitting up happily, and Harry sulked but agreed to behave himself. He hates that Malfoy has him acting like a child again, but he can't deny that he had put himself in the position to be scolded, so he says impatiently, "It is Malfoy's son, though, right? He's the one starting all of this?"

Immediately, Harry felt his stomach clench. McGonagall was staring at him with such pity that it nearly wasn't a surprise when she said slowly, "From what I've seen and heard from other proffessors, it seems that the antagonizing has been primarily from Albus."

"But he wouldn't-"

"Mister Potter, I've had sixteen different incidents reported where your son has harassed Scorpius Malfoy. There are only four where Scorpius is at blame."

"But surely he wouldn't-I mean-Malfoy and I fought all the time in school, and we were never dragged to the office to talk to our parents."

Harry expected Malfoy to say something biting like 'That's because some of us didn't have parents, Potty', but the remark never comes and he is resolved to listen to McGonagall instead say, "I wasn't Headmistress back then, and this goes beyond just a schoolboy rivalry."

"What's Albus done, then?" Harry asks, certain there is a mistake. Albus isn't a bully.

McGonagall looked surprised by the question, and then said thoughtfully, "Perhaps you should ask him, and see what sort of explanation he has for you."

"Albus?"

Harry was expecting a protest, or for Albus to tell him that he wasn't guilty and that Malfoys kid is as sneaky and underhanded as Malfoy himself, but his son instead looked at his lap with a subdued, red-cheeked expression. Harry's gut fell immediately in on itself.

There was a long moment of silence before Albus mumbled reluctantly, "Uncle Ron said that we should beat him in our classes, but he's such a know-it-all that it's hard, and he's really annoying. He won't stop correcting me in potions, and he keeps rubbing it in that he's doing better than me in defense against the dark arts."

"That's not all, Mister Potter." McGonagall cut across sternly. "Why don't you tell your father what happened just this afternoon, then? There is more to this than just fighting over grades."

Albus thinned his lips and shook his head embarrassedly, in answer to her request, and Harry felt so nauseous that the edges of his vision swam. Albus sent a nervous look towards the blonds on his left.

McGonagall nods when he doesn't say anything for several minutes, and picks up the slack to say, "Very well, then. Albus seems to be under the impression that it is okay to taunt Scorpius for being sorted into Hufflepuff, which, I can assure you, is the opposite of something to be ashamed of. He and his friends have taken to following Mister Malfoy between classes to harass him about the hats decision, and to prod at sore subjects, like his fathers alleged past as a death eater. He-"

"His father WAS a death eater." Harry had huffed before he realized he had spoken.

"I was pardoned, Potter." Malfoy sneered with narrowed eyes, which only drove Harry's blood pressure to a new high.

"Thanks to me, you were!"

"Oh, of course you would believe that! I wasn't charged because I didn't join them willingly_-it had nothing to do with your 'selfless' testimony you gigantic prick!"

"What would you know about pricks, Malfoy? You've barely even got one!" Harry screamed across the room, with full awareness that he was being childish. He couldn't help himself, though. Malfoy just made him that angry sometimes, which was something not even the criminals at Harry's work could do anymore.

"Oh, that's mature, Potter, hope you didn't strain your only brain cell to think up that one."

McGonagall sat in silence until they both remembered themselves and sat back down in embarrassment. Harry hadn't remembered standing up out of his chair. They both met her eyes apologetically and she asked waspishly, "Are you quite finished?"

They sulkily lapsed into silence. Her eyes narrowed and there wasn't a sound for several long minutes aside from the ticking of the miniature clock on her desk before and she said, "Mister Malfoy was not a death eater by choice, and even if he had been, it has no business being used as a reason to target his son. You understand that, don't you, Potter?"

Both Potters reluctantly nodded at that, and Harry chances a look at Malfoy to find that he is fuming beside his son, refusing to face them. McGonagall then said, with a strange look toward Scorpius, an uncomfortable expression on her face, "There has also been an issue regarding the sexuality of Mister Malfoy, and Albus's exploitation of that."

"You're saying that Malfoys son is gay?" Harry asked with wide eyes, and he doesn't mean to be so surprised, it's just that he just can't help imagining Draco's reaction to that.

"No, she is saying that I'm gay, and your son won't quit throwing it in my kids face._" Draco snorted derisively, before Harry could complete the mental scenario he had been drafting in his head.

"Shut up Malfoy, I'm only asking because I didn't-" Harry realized very suddenly that he had been serious and says in a way that is much more skeptical than he means it to be, "Oh. You're bent?"

Draco groaned and tipped his head towards the ceiling to answer, and Scorpius stifles a giggle into his hand when Harry looks around in confusion, wondering how he hadn't know that.

"But you're married to a girl!" Harry cried in confusion. Malfoy almost seemed to wince.

"I'm widowed, Potter." Malfoy said patiently, and Harry pretended not to notice the practiced dry tone in his voice, or the way Scorpius immediately grabbed his fathers hand.

"Oh. I didn't know that. I'm sorry, Malfoy." Harry says, sincerely. He knows that Astoria adored Draco; he had seen them together in the paper when they first married, and again when they had their son.

"She was a good girl." McGonagall sighed gently, with a meaningful look, and Draco nodded with a stiff swallow, as she continued, "It seems you two can be civil. I think you need to each take your sons aside and speak to them, privately, to try and resolve whatever conflict it is that they have, and I will see what you come up with for a punishment."

"We're deciding?" Harry asked in surprise, once again caught off guard.

"They will have detentions, of course, but I think it would be wise if they understood why, and a parent often does a better job at rearing understanding than a proffessor does. I would like you to determine the length the detentions should go on, and I will decide if it seems reaonable. Now, I will come back in ten minutes, and I expect you to have all apologized to one another by then."

"All of us?" Albus asked in surprise.

McGonagall smirked as she turned around, and said mischevieuosly, "Children follow their parents examples. I want your fathers to set a good one, so, yes, you will all apologize."

2. Chapter 2

Harry and Malfoy stood frozen for several seconds when the door finally banged shut, and their sons fidgeted in their seats until Harry sighed and dropped a hand on Albus's shoulder, shepherding him out of his seat and to the opposite end of the room to talk with him. Malfoy followed his example, and Harry tried to block out the other mans presence as he knelt in front of Albus, trying to decide what he should say. He had never been in a situation like this before; never thought he would be. Had Harry's stories about Malfoy really affected his son enough to turn him into a bully? Thinking back on everything he had told him, shame sank into his gut, and he realized that, yes, he probably had painted a terrible picture of the Malfoy family for Albus, and was probably more than a little bit to blame for his sons behavior.

Finally, he found his words, and asked gently, clearing his throat, "Do you know why Malfoy was so terrible to me and your Uncle Ron and Aunt Hermione when we were kids?"

"No." Albus admitted slowly, his forehead wrinkled in confusion as his eyebrows pinched together. Harry had a feeling he was expecting a lecture about his behavior, and a smile twitched on his lips at his sons expression. _Yes, he looked exactly how Harry did when he was confused. _

"It was because his parents raised him to believe other people were beneath him, and to hate people for that reason. I think I may have accidentally given you the impression that Scorpius Malfoy is like his father was at this age, but he isn't. I don't want to raise you to treat anybody like that. Malfoy isn't so bad now, really, and if his son is anything like him, than I'm sure he's a great kid-even if he IS a Hufflepuff." Harry said, with a wink when understanding crossed the boys features.

"I guess." Albus muttered, looking at his feet, "But he's still a know-it-all."

"So is Aunt Hermione, but you like her." Harry smiled a little, reaching out to ruffle his sons hair. "you don't have to like him, but You do need to apologize to Scorpius, and to Mister Malfoy."

"His dad too?"

"You used information about him to hurt his son; I think that very much deserves an apology. Bullying somebody else is never okay, even if you think it's for the right reasons," Harry nodded sternly, without room for question, "and I think a months detention ought to help that lesson to sink in."

"A whole month?! but dad-"

"You taunted Malfoy for longer than that, I think it's reasonable, unless you want it to be longer?" Harry asked knowingly, raising his eyebrows in challenge. He didn't want their kids to become versions of what they themselves had been as children. He didn't want to put his experiences on them.

"No, a month is fine." Albus grumbled disappointedly, and looked across the room at the two Malfoys. Harry looked over too and sat back on his heels to watch Malfoy talking to Scorpius, bent down to his level and speaking earnestly.

He pretended not to listen in, making a point of crossing his arms and watching the toe of his shoe circle over a divot in the tile floor, but his ears pricked at hearing Draco Malfoy say, "Don't let anybody tell you that you don't belong in Hufflepuff, Scorp. Professor Longbottom even says that you practically bleed your house colors. You're a _great_ Hufflepuff, and I'm glad the sorting hat didn't put you into Slytherin like it did me. It wanted me to go to Ravenclaw, did you know? I argued my way out of that, though. Should have let it do what it wanted, now that I know how good I look in blue."

Scorpius snorted a little, rolling his eyes, and Draco grinned, his face relaxing a fraction at being able to put his son at ease. He glanced at Harry, who flushed at meeting his eye, but then the blond had turned back to his son and was saying, "And about me being a

death eater, I know I made some bad decisions in my youth, but I stand behind the one I made to protect my family, because it got me you, and your mother, and that will always make it worth it. Come on, now, Potter has probably lectured his son into a daze about good Gryffindor morals and ethics. We should intervene before before he starts off on a rant about Albus's namesake."

Harry was struck by that idea, and internally wondered why he hadn't thought of that himself, as nobody could help him make a point more than Dumbledore. He nearly opened his mouth to comment on that, ready to tell Albus all about how Dumbledore would have expected unity between the boys, but he flushed when Malfoy met his eye again, and realized that the blond had been making fun of him, in some way.

They marched their boys to the center of the room to apologize, watched them reluctantly shake hands (which took Harry back to when he had rejected Draco's in their first year) and mutter their apologies, and then stood blinking stupidly at each other as their sons shifted uncomfortably. Harry as determined to make the first move, and had just talked himself into doing it when Malfoy stuck his hand out and said with a remarkably pink face, "Err, sorry I was a prat when we were in school."

"I'm sorry you were a prat too." Harry said before he could help himself, and Malfoy nearly snatched his hand back when Harry seized it quickly in his own, amending hurriedly, "I'm kidding, I'm kidding. I'm, uh, sorry I wasn't able to help you like I did everyone else."

"You're such a Gryffindor, Potter." Malfoy groaned, but they shook hands anyways,

and told McGonagall their decisions for the length of their sons detentions when she returned. Scorpius got saddled with two weeks, which seemed unfair to Harry until McGonagall pointed out that he had started a few minor fights of his own. Harry and Malfoy stood a little awkwardly in front of the floo when they made to leave, after hugging their sons goodbye, and Harry was almost ready to believe Malfoy had changed, but the blond elbowed him in the ribs to get into the floo first, and Harry heard him say, just as he disappeared, "See you next year, when my son is going to cream yours in quidditch."

"Malfoy!" Harry shouted at the empty fire place, struggling to tell if the blond had been serious or not. He was so distracted by the quick little barb that this time he did trip when he came out of the fireplace in Grimmerald Place, and cursed Malfoy in his head as soot sprayed the matted carpet. He couldn't deny, though, that it was nice to have a bit of a competitive edge between them again, even if Malfoy had been kidding-which Harry still wasn't sure he had been-and he found himself looking forward to seeing the blond at quidditch games. He could handle this. He could handle seeing Malfoy a few times a year to banter. _

XXXXXXXXXX

****Authors Note: ****This chapter is really short too, sorry for that, it's just to establish the general relationship between characters before we really start getting into this story. I'm really excited

for this one, and I hope you guys are too! Thanks to everyone who is reading and reviewing, keep up the nice comments and please keep enjoying my work, you guys are making this a lot of fun for me!

3. Chapter 3

Harry saw Malfoy a few more times in the weeks following the incident, and found that they were still tense in one another's presence, and never said a word to one another that wasn't practiced and polite, often commenting on mundane things like the weather and the price of school books going up. Harry had managed to gather from Albus's letters that he and Scorpius had managed to form a tentative friendship, but it wasn't enough to make him stop Malfoy and say hello, unable to shake the feeling that they would fall back into their school habits and end up with fists curled and wands drawn.

Harry figured that he was alright with the Malfoys, since he certainly didn't hate them, and he wasn't able to keep the smile off his face when Ron told him in agony during a lunch break at the ministry, "Rose is friends with bloody Malfoy, of all people! 'Mione says it's great, of course, but even_I_know she doesn't_trust_him! I thought we had raised them right, telling them to keep away from the ferret and his son. Bloody Slytherins."

Ginny had gotten a week off quidditch training to nurse a shoulder injury, and had met them for lunch, but had rolled her eyes and gotten up to grab a coffee when Ron started in about Malfoy. Harry was fine with that, as she had been strangely defensive about the friendship their kids had with Scorpius, and didn't want to listen to her arguing with Ron over it. Harry shrugged, watching his ex chat up the man behind the counter, then shrugged and told Ron, "He's not a bad kid, really. And Scorpius was sorted into Hufflepuff, not Slytherin."

"_Hufflepuff!_" Ron's eyes bulged, and Harry hid a smile as he tipped his drink up towards his mouth. He had anticipated that reaction, and still found it amusing himself when he thought about it. He was trying to restrain himself though, in case Albus or his other kids would pick up on his attitude and go back to making an enemy of the Malfoy boy. Ron was immediately laughing, though, and snorted, "Merlin, I bet Malfoy had a fit when he found out! That's good old fashioned karma, that is!"

"He didn't seem to mind, really, any of the times I've seen him." Harry admitted thoughtfully, and he wondered if Malfoy ever did. It wasn't fun to imagine Malfoy being blasé about it, though, and he decided that if he had to think about it, he would let the version of Malfoy in his head be horrified.

"Still talking about Malfoy?" Ginny asked as she sat down between them again, and slid a greasy plate of fries towards the center of the table.

"Ron's obsessed with him, Gin." Harry grinned, "He's like me back in sixth year."

"Ha bloody ha." Ron rolled his eyes, "You told him that Albus is going to destroy his kid when it comes to important things like

quidditch, didn't you? 'Mione told me that you saw him at Hogwarts when you went up to see Albus earlier this year. Was he a git like normal?"

"A complete git." Harry grinned, shaking his head fondly, "And I'm sure he is completely aware of the amazing Quidditch genes my son has got. With me and Ginny for parents, Malfoy's son doesn't stand a chance."

"I don't like the bashing on him, I hope you know." Ginny told them with a shake of her head and a chuckle, "But Albus is going to kick that pureblood snot's kid into the dirt come Quidditch season next year."

"Hear, hear!" Harry and Ron grinned, and cracked the rims of their coffee cups together in some form of a toast.

"Draco Malfoy won't know what hit him!"

XXXXXXXXXXXX

Harry, Ron and Ginny spent extra time training their kids for Quidditch that summer, as Hermione watched from the window of the burrow, shaking her head in disapproval every time Ron tried to sneak in a lesson about how to play dirty without getting caught. It turned out that Rose shone on the field more than the others, but she insisted that she didn't have an interest in playing for the school, so the adults put their attention back on Albus, who was a slightly less talented seeker than Harry had been. That was alright, though, since Albus seemed to have a very different technique than Harry did, and a completely different set of skills.

When Harry and Ginny apparated in front of the Hogs Head on the first game day, Ron and Hermione were already inside, and nervous excitement was buzzing in Harry's stomach. He couldn't help wondering if his own parents would have felt this way if they had been alive to go to his games, and the knot in his gut tightened just slightly at the thought. He didn't get the chance to dwell on it too long, though, because he and Ginny were already pushing through the crowd to get to Ron and Hermione's table.

"Your son is playing Malfoy's today, isn't he, then?"

"Yupp. Both made seeker, if you can believe it." Ginny sighed, plopping down next to Hermione and waving at the bartender to signal that she wanted a butterbeer.

"Well, if history is repeating itself, then it's no question who is about to win." Ron snorted happily, then he asked Harry with a small smile, as if he expected him to know, "Any clue what Malfoy's been up to lately? He's stayed out of the paper for a good while now."

"Nah, no news." Harry shook his head with a grin, refusing to admit that he had been checking lately. "Last I heard he was over in Bulgaria chatting with Viktor Krum, but that's just a rumor I heard from Robbards on the lift."

"Hm, no, they dated for a few months back in the summer." Hermione said, without looking up from her book. She was working as an assistant to the minister, and had just been promoted to what, Harry

didn't quite know- and she was trying to keep up with the new laws he wanted to draft, reading up on changes and and researching their validity. Harry didn't envy her in the least. She said distractedly, "Viktor sent an owl the other week and he mentioned it, but they aren't together anymore."

"You still get owls from Krum?" Harry asked skeptically, expecting Ron to be mad.

"He taught at Rosie's training camp before school started up again, and we've kept in touch. He's got a little girl of his own now, I think he said, but the mother isn't in the picture." Hermione informed him, and reluctantly closed her book, looking very pained to do so. Ron cast a charm to shrink it down, and she slid it into her bag, her eyes refocussing as she looked around the table.

"Hmm." Harry nodded, then looked down at his watch and cursed, saying, "Is that the time? We'd better go, or we won't get any seats to watch the kids duke it out."

They made their way up towards the castle with a pace that was only a bit faster than walking, and made it to the line with a small sea of parents that were chatting excitedly, queuing to get into the pitch. It was difficult to stay together as the line grew, and became more of a crowd, and Hermione kept yelling over his head to Ron, "Did you bring your Gryffindor scarf? Did you ever send Albus that broom maintenance book that he left at the burrow?"

Harry noticed a bit belatedly that Malfoy had been jostled around in the line to end up behind them, and was thrown off guard when he realized that the man was sporting Hufflepuff face paint on his cheekbones like a football player, and was wearing a grey and yellow scarf, his cheeks a little red with the cold. Harry didn't say anything for a while, for some reason hoping that Malfoy wouldn't notice them, or maybe that he would, as he hadn't decided whether he wanted to talk to him or not. He had a feeling Malfoy knew he was there anyways, and the idea was confirmed when Draco leaned forward and says into his ear, breath hot on Harry's neck, "Ready to watch Gryffindor get creamed by a bunch of badgers?"

"Not likely, ferret face!" Harry snorted, surprised at how easy it was to banter with Malfoy. It was as close to casual as they had been, and they stood in companionable silence as they made their way up in the line. Harry's group had somehow gotten ahead of him, but Hermione signaled that they would save him a seat and Harry nodded his thanks.

McGonagall met them at the entrance, and rose her eyebrows, warning, "I hope you two plan on behaving yourselves this time."

They both flushed a little and assured her that they'd be on their best behavior as they ducked into the pitch, separating once they got to the stair. Harry found his friends after his second time circling the Gryffindor side of the stands, and settled down beside Ron, who had managed to sneak in a handful of chocolate frogs and was splitting them up between the four of them. He saw Malfoy across the pitch with Pansy Parkinson, who he was hugging hello as he admired her Hufflepuff scarf. They didn't see Harry though, and he looked onto the pitch to cheer wildly as the Gryffindor team marched out into the grass.

"Oh, Harry," Ginny said as they got into position, her eyes going wide as her hands curled around his arm worriedly, "He looks so small playing with those older kids. Maybe we shouldn't have told him to do this, he'll be an easy target for how small he is!"

"Oi!" Ron huffed from beside Harry, leaning around him to stare at his sister in horror, "We didn't spend a whole summer training him just to let his mummy pull him out of the game, did we?"

"Albus will be fine, Gin." Hermione said, with a much more sympathetic tone than Ron had, "Besides, look at little Scorpius Malfoy; they are pretty much matched for size. They'll do fine."

Harry nodded as well in encouragement, but he was just as put off as his ex-wife by how small Albus looked on the field, and he wasn't sure he would stop her if she did decide to drag him kicking and screaming off of the field. Quidditch was dangerous. What if he got hurt?_

They started into the air, and Harry realized it was too late to do anything to stop his son playing, so he looked across the pitch at Malfoy instead, wondering if the blond was as nervous as he was. He didn't seem to be too concerned, his eyes locked on Scorpius, who was circling the pitch in search of the snitch, but he did see Malfoy jump out of his seat in alarm when Scorpius was nearly hit by a bludger. His hands were shaking when he sat back down, and Harry almost felt better about worrying so much when he heard Ginny shout, and the same bludger that had missed Malfoy's son struck Albus's elbow, knocking his hand away from the snitch Harry hadn't realized he'd been after.

"I'm fine!" Albus shouted, and refused to be pulled from the game, flexing his arm experimentally and then angling back up into the sky, Scorpius Malfoy on his tail. Ginny was gripping his arm so tight that his fingers were numb, but he didn't look away from his son again, completely aware of how close a call he had just had.

He tried to focus on the game after that, but worried every time Albus seemed to be favoring his uninjured arm. Gryffindor maintained a strong lead, and he was prideful of that, but it wasn't long before Hufflepuff managed to tie the score. Draco met his eye and immediately the tension was back. Harry was determined to see Albus win, and threw himself into supporting him, as Draco did the same on the other side, screaming abuse at the ref at nearly every call. Harry saw McGonagall hear one of his more colorful swears, and nearly laughed when she put her face into her hands to groan.

He was able to get completely back into the competitive spirit when the two seekers were racing through the air, whistling past after the snitch. He was sure he had never been more excited in his life, screaming at the top of his lungs, with both sides of the stands on their feet, shouting and cheering. He was so exhilarated that he forgot to be disappointed when Scorpius shot ahead of Albus and closed his fist around the snitch, and Hufflepuff's side of the pitch went wild. Malfoy looked so proud Harry thought he might cry with joy, cheering and jumping and spinning Pansy around excitedly in his arms, not caring who looked at him funny-and people were looking at them funny. McGonagall was craning her neck from the teachers box to

chuckle at him.

The people in the stands took their time leaving, chattering on about the game, and about how close it had been. A girl that looked mysteriously like Katie Bell slipped past him as he, Ron, Hermione, and Ginny worked their way down the stairs, and Harry felt very much like he did when he was a kid leaving Quidditch games, full of adrenaline and excitement. Ron said determinedly to Ginny, "He'll get it next time, I'm sure. He was a hair away, I thought for sure he would manage to grab it first."

Harry and Ginny met Albus just outside the change rooms as he came off the field carrying his broom, and Harry suddenly remembered his arm injury, asking urgently, "You had it looked at, didn't you? You were cleared to walk around?"

"Relax, dad," Albus snorted, pushing HARRY away when he tried to pry albus's arm closer to himself to inspect for an injury, "It barely grazed me, I'm fine. You'll never believe it, though-"

"You had it checked, didn't you?" Ginny interrupted anxiously, "Quidditch injuries can be really serious if you don't get them looked at, and-"

"Madame Hooch said I was okay, but you've got to hear this!" Albus insisted, practically jumping in his excitement, "You'll never believe it dad, I swear!"

"Alright, alright." Harry chuckled, forcing himself to relax. "Is this about the game?"

"It's about Scorpius's dad!" Albus beamed, and didn't notice when Ron groaned, too caught up with his own news, "You'll never _believe _what Mister Malfoy is going to do! Uncle Ron, you were totally wrong about him; he's _got _to be the coolest dad there is, you'll _never_ believe this!"

XXXXXXXXXX

****Authors Note:**** Can anybody guess what Draco is going to do in the next chapter? This is sort of a mini cliff-hanger, but I want to see what you guys think is about to happen. I'm looking forward to seeing what people think about this story, and I wanted to know how many of you are actually reading both of the stories I'm doing? That seems really mental to me, having people read multiple works of mine, so please let me know if you're a fan or not of both! Thank you so much guys!

4. Chapter 4

Albus had to tell them four times before they were able to pull together and grasp what he was trying to tell them, and even then, Harry had to stuff a finger in his ear to try and clear it so that he could repeat through his shock, "Malfoy is doing _what?" _

"I told you already!" Albus snorted, his face lighting up, "He and Scorpius made a deal, so he's getting a tattoo on his bum!"

_So he _had_ heard Albus correctly. _Hermione's lips twitched with

what almost looked like a smile, and she asked, "Why on earth would Malfoy do that?"

"He told Scorpius that if Hufflepuff scored more than 200 points he would get a badger tattooed on his bum!" Albus grinned, "You'll let us go to watch, won't you? I've never seen a tattoo done on somebody-Scorp says that his dad has a bunch of them, did you know?"

"You are not about to watch a grown man get a tattoo on his arse, Albus, that's completely inappropriate!" Ginny snorted firmly, shaking her head. "You hardly know the man!"

Harry was ready to argue that, thinking that it would be brilliant to watch Malfoy get a tattoo of a badger, but didn't get the chance to comment, as a blond head was bobbing through the crowd towards them, and Scorpius Malfoy popped into view from behind someones elbow. He was panting and sweaty, but grinning brightly, and said excitedly, "Dad said that you can come, if you want to, Al. Merlin, I'll never let him live this down!"

"Think your father would mind if we tagged along too, Scorpius?" Hermione cut in, smirking to herself, and Harry could have kissed her for wanting to see this as badly as he did. Scorpius frowned at her, confusion in his face, until she flushed and said quickly, "I'm Albus's aunt-I went to school with your father."

"She's Hermione Granger." Albus said proudly, and Harry pretended not to be jealous that Albus never talked about him with that same type of awe in his voice.

"Oh." Scorpius said in surprise, and craned his head back to get a better look at her. Hermione almost seemed to be bracing herself, but Scorpius only shrugged and said, "You were right, Al, Rose does look a lot like her. I'm sure dad won't mind if you come along too. Err, are all of you coming?"

"Oh," Ron said, rubbing his hands together and grinning like a child on Christmas morning, "There is no way I'm missing this."

Ginny didn't argue again after that, and sighed as she followed them to find Malfoy, who's face went gryffindor red at seeing them all.

"I told you to bring Albus, not the entire horde of Potters and Weasley's." He groaned, as Scorpius slid up to his side, his face still shining.

"You'll still do it, won't you dad? You did say that if I-"

"Yes, I'm doing it." Malfoy groaned in mortification as Ron sniggered, "A promise is a promise, and I lost the bet. You need to get permission from McGonagall's before we go, though."

There was a hopeful note in Draco's voice, and Harry had the vague impression that he hoped McGonagall would forbid them from going, but the exact opposite happened, however, as she met Draco's eyes following the request, smiled gently, and said, "I see no harm in a trip to Hogsmead, so long as you've brought the boys back to the school before curfew."

Draco walked like a condemned man all the way to the gates, and somehow Neville had heard about what was going on, because just as they were getting to apparate into Hogsmead, he came running from the greenhouse, dirt speckling his top and hair wild on his head. Malfoy lowered his wand at seeing his approach, and groaned, "Ugh, Longbottom. Bloody hell, did you send him an owl about it? How does word travel so fast?"

"Bet you wish Pansy was here to save you, don't you?" Scorpius grinned as Neville came to a panting stop beside them, wheezing and doubling over to catch his breath, leaving dirty hand prints on his jeans when he finally stood up.

"Sorry," He told them all breathlessly, red-faced from the exertion, "I was working with the mandrakes, and I ran as fast as I could when i found out. Malfoy's gonna tattoo a badger on his arse?"

"I'm not very good at making bets." Malfoy said primly, and stuck his nose defensively in the air, "And you smell like dirt, Longbottom."

"_Dad_." Scorpius groaned in horror, "He's my_teacher_."

"Ah, don't worry, Scorp." Neville winked at the younger blond, "Your dad's always been a grump."

"Got a stick up his arse, too." Ron muttered, "They'll probably have to move it for the tattoo."

Malfoy's head whipped towards Ron and he growled, "I don't have a-"

"You do, mate." Neville grinned, "I would know; I work with plants, after all."

"Ha bloody ha." Draco rolled his eyes, but Harry saw the edged of his mouth curling into the slightest of smiles, even if there was an anxious shine in his eyes. He figured that Malfoy was far more overwhelmed by the group than he let on, and Harry took a step back to give him space, which he was sure Malfoy noticed, as his shoulders relaxed a little. "Should we go, then?"

"You lead the way." Harry shrugged.

"Right. Grab my hand, Scorp." Malfoy nodded, and held his wand up again, dissaparating him and his son with a crack.

Harry and Ginny followed with Albus, and Ron and Hermione appeared just after them, Neville coming up last, stumbling a little when he landed on an uneven bit of sidewalk.

The tattoo artist was a slight girl with only a few tattoo's herself, but she seemed to know Draco, waving him over to the counter as they walked in, asking with a grin, "What is it this time? Thinking about taking my suggestion for the snitch?"

"He wants a badger." Scorpius said, standing beside his father at the counter with a mischievous grin. "A_Hufflepuff _badger."

The girl dropped the quill she had been twisting in her fingers, and stared at Draco in shock, asking, "Merlin, have you lost your bloody mind? Never mind, you're the customer, do what you want. Where will you have it, then?"

"On his bum." Scorpius smirked, and crossed his arms in victory when Draco winced and the girl stifled a laugh behind her hand.

Harry couldn't help adding thoughtfully, "Tattoo like that seems a bit..._cheeky_...doesn't it?"

"Potter, I will finish what the dark lord started right here if you don't shut your mouth." Malfoy threatened, his face flaming as the Gryffindors and Scorpius doubled over on themselves to laugh at his expense.

"Why stop at just a badger?" The girl asked, and she flipped open a book of her tattoo designs, "Why not get the whole Hufflepuff emblem? I'll charge you the same amount."

"Oh my god, Malfoy, I dare you!" Neville snorted, laughing so hard he had tears gathering in the corners of his eyes. "Can you imagine Malfoy walking around with the entire Hufflepuff emblem on his ass?"

It only took Ron a few well placed jibes to goad Malfoy into doing it, and suddenly they were all in the back room, watching Malfoy sit with the top half of his left buttocks exposed as the girl from behind the desk worked to do the tattoo. He told Hermione jokingly when Malfoy peeled down the edge of his pants, "You're not allowed to watch; the only persons butt you should be seeing is mine."

There was almost nothing exposed, though, and Harry wondered why that disappointed him, but he didn't say it out loud. The lack of skin Malfoy was showing also seemed to put Ginny at ease, and her hand on Harry's arm relaxed. Malfoy squirmed uncomfortably, the blush never leaving his face, and made a comment about the coldness of the chair he was on before he went silent.

Albus frowned midway to her finishing, and asked, "Don't you have to come back and do multiple sessions to finish it?"

"Wizard tattoo's, darling." The girl turned to smile at him, "We get them done much more efficiently. You'd look nice with a boat on your shoulder, you know. Some big ship with dark sails and a rolling skyline."

"Would I?" Albus asked with wide, curious eyes, and Harry exchanged a worried look with Ginny at the hope sparking in them.

"Talk to me when you're seventeen, and I'll set you right up." The girl winked, and then turned to Draco, casting a quick charm and saying kindly, "You're finished, Draco. Want to take a look at it?"

"No." Malfoy said, and whipped his jeans back up over the tattoo, standing grumpily to face them, asking, "You all happy now?"

He hadn't stopped them all from getting a good look at the finished product, though, and that, along with the tortured expression on

Malfoys face had them all cracking up again, Ginny going so far as to bury her head against Harry's neck to hide the sound of her snorting. Ron declared, as Malfoy looked ready to shout at them, "The fact that you've got the Hufflepuff emblem permanently emblazoned on your arse cheek, Malfoy, just about makes up for everything you've ever done to us. Come on, you're still a git, but I'll gladly treat you to a pint after this!"

Neville wasn't comfortable going back to the school after drinking, so he took Scorpius and Albus back alone while Malfoy was dragged by Harry and Ron into the nearest pub, which happened to be the Three Broomsticks. It was almost friendly, the way they chatted with Malfoy, and ribbed him over his new tattoo-which he admitted was uncomfortable to sit on, making Ron fall into a fit of giggles again-and Harry wondered why he had been so uncertain about him. He didn't exactly fit in with them, and he was still a bit uptight, but Harry could tell he loved his son, and that he had changed after the war, and was more than happy to go for a drink with the blond every now and again, if they could only continue to get on so well. Malfoy didn't tell Ron, but Harry noticed that he only sipped from his butterbeer before he pushed the rest to Ginny, who winked at him before downing it._What was going on there?_

Malfoy continued to do that with all of his drinks, and Harry was sure he was mostly sober even when everyone else felt the light buzzing of alcohol in their blood, Hermione and Ginny drank far more than Harry and Ron did, though, and it wasn't long before they called it a night, Harry supporting Ginny awkwardly as they stumbled out of the pub and onto the street.

They were nearly ready to go their separate ways when Malfoy cursed to himself and said, "Left my scarf in the stands at the school. I'd best go and get it."

"Oh!" Hermione groaned against Rons neck, "I don't have my bag! We need to go back, I can't leave it there, my book is in it! Hand me my wand, I can-"

"I'll get it, 'Mione." Harry said quickly, before she got the chance to drunkenly splinch herself. "Ron can take you and Gin to the burrow, and I'll run and pick up your bag. I can bring it to work next Monday, and you can get it from me in the lift in the morning."

"Thanks Happy." Hermions said with a sticky smile, and Harry didn't have the heart to correct her, instead helping Ginny stagger closer to Ron, who nodded gratefully at Harry before apparating away. Harry and Malfoy stood silently for a moment, and then Malfoy made an uncomfortable noise in the back of his throat and apparated to outside Hogwarts without a word. Harry made it to the gate just seconds after him, but somehow the blond was already halfway to the pitch, walking like his heels were about to catch fire.

Malfoy didn't find his scarf, but Hermione's bag was tucked under a bench where she had left it. The pair met at the exit, both surprised to see McGonagall standing at the end of the stairs with her wand drawn, a look of surprise on her face as she saw them. "Oh," She said, disappointment sliding across her face, "I had thought a pair of kids snuck out here. Your boys are in their dorms, I presume?"

"Neville brought them back for us." Harry said, then blurted, far more inebriated than he realized before, "Malfoy got the Hufflepuff crest tattooed on his bum."

"_Potter!" _Malfoy shouted in mortification, looking wide-eyed between his old professor and Harry.

McGonagall stared at him for a long moment, her expression unreadable, then lowered her wand, crossed her arms together, and coughed into her fist as her face warmed. Harry realized suddenly how horribly inappropriate that had probably been. "Sorry, I'm a little drunk and I-"

He stopped talking. It wasn't doing him any good.

McGonagall nodded sharply at him, then turned to Malfoy and said, "I was under the impression that the trip to Hogsmead was only for a bit of shopping. Oh, well, I should have known better that that when I saw you with a Weasley. Now, as Hogwarts headmistress, I think it is my duty to be sure you have an accurate representation of our prestigious house, mister Malfoy. Perhaps I should check to be certain there are no flaws in the design."

Harry couldn't believe it, and he and Malfoy exchanged horrified looks as they gauged her seriousness, and determined her words to be a joke-or at least Harry thought they had. Malfoy was slightly more drunk than he let on though, or else he was just out of his mind, because a second after Harry thought they had agreed she was joking, Malfoy had whipped around and dropped trou, gold and grey tattoo winking at McGonagall, who threw her hands up and shouted in a mixture of outrage and amusement, "MISTER MALFOY!"

Harry couldn't even find it in him to laugh, he was so stunned. It was only out for what must have been a half second, and then Malfoy had pulled his pants back up and buckled his belt with the most smug, shit-eating grin Harry had ever seen, saying, "At least you got a look at my better side, headmistress."

That time, Harry did laugh, and McGonagall turned away with a crimson face, muttering about how she had never seen a Slytherin with such clearly Gryffindor qualities. Harry laughed all the way home, and even when he tried to fall asleep, he couldn't stop looking at the ceiling, replaying his time with Malfoy in his head, a smile working its way across his face. _Draco Malfoy was something else.

-

XXXXXXXXXX

****Authors note: ****This is so cheesy oh my god, but I wanted to give a fun spin on the characters and get them to a place where they are at least somewhat comfortable with each other, enough that they can be ridiculous and drunk and completely stupid, which is something I always find funny. Thought or questions? Please review!

5. Chapter 5

Harry woke the next morning with a pounding headache and a severe case of memory loss as the sun streamed through his open front window

to blind him. All he remembered was that there had been a Quidditch match, and that he had spent time with Malfoy after the game. Everything else was fuzzy, and his ears were ringing so terribly it made his eyes water. It took him three whole minutes to realize that it wasn't actually _ his ears ringing, but his alarm, and he rolled over onto his stomach to clap a hand over it, successfully silencing it. It helped his headache marginally.

He took his time in the shower, enjoying the spray of hot water on his back, so soothing it nearly put him back to sleep before he remembered that he was supposed to be getting ready for work at the ministry. He didn't have field work, which he was grateful for, as he was sure he couldn't get through it in the state he was in, but he wasn't looking forward to the paperwork that was likely piled on his desk.

He made it to work only five minutes late, which he thought wasn't so bad considering his headache, but then he realized he had left his auror robes on the bed and had to apparate back to his apartment to pick them up. The auror department had really started to crack down on employees who didn't wear their uniforms during all hours in the ministry, whether they were doing paperwork or not. Harry knew he would probably get away with only his jeans and tee shirt, being who he was, but he didn't want to use his name to get what he wanted, and he didn't feel like having his coworkers resenting him. By the time he was back he was fifteen minutes late, and Ron was sat at his desk, moaning into his arms and nudging a cup of coffee away from himself.

"I forgot Mion'e bag." Harry said as he sat heavily, and tried to ignore how much the bright lights of the office hurt his head.

"She'll thank you for it. She's worse off than I am; she has no business reading any of the books she's got in it." Ron mumbled, then looked up to squint at Harry, frowning deeply to ask, "Did you brush your hair this morning at all?"

Harry shrugged, honestly not able to draw enough focus to try and remember, then touched the corner of his mouth to tell Ron groggily, "You've got toothpaste, just there."

"Oh." Ron said, blinking and not moving to scrub it off, "I didn't know I brushed my teeth this morning. Good for me."

Harry would have wondered if he had himself, but he could still taste the mint of his mouthwash at the back of his throat, and the question answered itself. He looked around the office they were in, as they were the only two in it, and asked, "Want to lock the door and nap till lunch?"

"Thank Merlin." Ron sighed, and stood up, moving to the door and practically slamming it closed, twisting the lock into place. "I took a headache potion, but it hasn't helped a bit."

They managed to fall asleep at their desks until noon, when Hermione knocked on their door and startled them awake, Rons arms flailing as he sat up and shouted, "We're working on a case!"

"Ronald, it's me." Hermione called, "We all know you two are sleeping

in there, we can hear you snoring. Come on, I've got hangover potions from the fourth floor, but you've got to eat something before you take them."

Harry and Ron exchanged relieved glances with one another and quickly marched out of the office, following Hermione down to the canteen, where they bought sandwiches and water (Hermione had slapped Harry's arm when he tried to go for a soda, telling him that it would do the opposite of help him). Harry's hangover had already started to fade, but once he downed the potion he felt particularly more awake, and far less miserable. Ron had a smile so wide he was at a risk for his face to get stuck that way. Hermione merely sighed and said, "I imagine Ginny is doing terrible. She floored back over to Romania to go to a practice for her team."

"With how much she drank last night?" Ron asked in awe, "I don't know how she does it."

"She's resilient." Hermione sighed, then shook her curls out of her face and asked Harry with a frown, "How were things with Malfoy last night? Did you two find what you were looking for?"

Hearing Malfoy's name triggered an avalanche of memories his sore head had previously omitted, and Harry jerked upright, blurting before he could stop himself, "Malfoy flashed McGonagall!"

Hermione spat her water across the table, choking, and Ron pounded her back until she was able to settle herself enough to ask hoarsely, eyes watering, "Malfoy did _what_, _Harry?"

Ron had a gobsmacked expression on his face, but he didn't say a word, so Harry explained sheepishly, "His bare arse. He showed his bare arse to McGonagall."

"Why the bloody hell did he do that?"

"Well, because she asked him to, I imagine." Harry said, making certain Hermione didn't have a mouth full of water. She was mopping up what she had spit out with napkins, and froze at what Harry said. He went through the scenario rather quickly after that, feeling second-hand embarrassment from the memory, and by the time he had finished, Ron had decided that they needed to get Malfoy drunk more often, if that was the type of story it produced.

"He wasn't drunk, though." Hermione frowned, "He kept foisting his drinks off on me and Gin. How else do you think we got drunk twice as fast as the two of you?"

"Don't you try to tell me that he pulled that stunt while sober." Ron scolded, crossing his arms and shaking his head as he sat back in his chair. "Malfoy isn't that brave."

"Perhaps he's changed." Hermione shrugged thoughtfully, "Or maybe we've misjudged him."

"Hardly." Ron snorted, "One night of drinking with the bloke doesn't make us friends. He's still a prat-a loony prat, apparently, but a prat none the less."

"Well, we'll just have to see next week, than, won't we?" Hermione

said, crossing her arms uncomfortably and staring at the table with her lips pursed.

"What do you mean next week? There isn't a Quidditch game next week." Ron frowned, but Harry caught her eye and his stomach flipped.

"You don't mean dinner at the burrow, do you?"

"Mione, you invited him to the burrow?!" Ron shrieked, his face white with horror, "Mum and dad will never allow it!"

"I didn't invite him, Ginny did! She thought we should play Quidditch again, for old times sake." Hermione winced, "Besides, he evens the teams. Now George doesn't have to sit out if Malfoy plays on the team with me and Gin."

"You couldn't have asked me first?" Ron groaned, putting his head down on the table in a show of distaste. "Feed a stray dog and you'll never be rid of him, haven't you ever heard that before?"

"First off, I didn't invite him. Second, he is hardly a stray dog, Ronald."

"Yeah?" Ron argued, lifting his head again, one of Hermione's napkins stuck to his forehead, "Explain why he's such a bitch, then?"

Harry pretended to cough into his elbow to hide his laugh, and Hermione thinned her lips to snatch the napkin off Rons head before she growled, "You'll play nicely, Ron, and no name calling. I'm sure everything will go just fine."

Harry was nearly in agreement with that, but couldn't help wondering when Malfoy and Ginny had gotten so close.

XXXXXXXXXX

Harry nervously anticipated the Weasleys bi-weekly dinner for four days before it happened, and the day of he changed his clothes twice, worried about what Malfoy would think of his outfit choice. Should he go casual, like he always did? Should he use a spell to keep his hair down? Maybe he ought to wear dress pants, but that wouldn't be practical if they were going to play Quidditch after dinner, would it? What was Malfoy going to wear?

Eventually he realized he was running late when his watch chirped its alarm, and he apparated onto the front steps of the burrow in a tee shirt and jeans, hoping he wasn't underdressed. Molly Weasley was just closing the door after Ginny when he arrived, and jumped back in surprise at his sudden arrival with a cry of, "Oh! Harry, you startled me, dear!"

"Sorry, Molly." He said sheepishly, and bent himself down into her hug, while scanning over her shoulder for Malfoy. He almost thought he hadn't arrived yet, but he knew Malfoy had a thing about being early, and finally spotted him through the kitchen, chatting with Arthur, who seemed tense but not all around unhappy to have the blond there. Molly pulled away from him, and followed his gaze, her smile looking a little more forced as the corners of her eyes crinkled and she said, "Ginny told you that she invited Malfoy, didn't she?"

"Yeah, I knew he'd come." Harry said, "He's going to play on hers and hermie's Quidditch team; even them up a bit so George can play."

"Oh, wonderful." Molly said, relaxing a fraction, "I knew you could let go of past rivalries, Harry. You'll be careful, won't you? You won't fight with him?"

"We've gotten on alright lately, actually." Harry said sheepishly, wondering why Ginny or Ron hadn't told her as much, or Malfoy himself.

"I know that, dear, it's just that you've got that famous temper of yours, and I know how the Malfoy boy used to rile you up. I've already spoken with my children about that, since they aren't much better."

"If anyone throws punches, Misses Weasley, it will be Ron." Harry winked, and chuckled when her hands clapped together in worry. "What are Malfoy and Arthur doing, anyways?"

"Oh, Arthur is just showing him his collection of wires." Molly said, with a meaningful look to Harry. He knew immediately what it meant. he hadn't looked it, but Arthur was trying to bait Malfoy into saying something rude about muggles so that he would show his old prejudice and be asked to leave. Harry quickly moved into the kitchen, intent on stopping them, but rather than arguing they appeared to be having quiet conversation, heads bent close over an old plug.

"Everything going all right?" Harry asked them, suspicion not quite fading.

"Hmm?" Arthur asked distractedly, then looked up at him, "Oh, yes, wonderful! I'm telling Malfoy about where I found this last week! Someone charmed it to spark all hours of the night, but I corrected it."

"You shouldn't keep things from work, Arthur." Molly scolded, coming up behind Harry and moving to the table, pushing aside the wires that were sprawled across its top, sighing, "Dear, we are about to eat, can't you please put these back in their box now?"

"Alright, alright." Arthur told her, pulling away from Malfoy to clear up his things. Harry exchanged a nervous look with the blond, who was in a button-down top and jeans, just a tad more formally dressed than Harry.

"Err, welcome to the burrow." Harry said stupidly, not knowing what he should say.

"Thanks, Potter." Malfoy grinned, "Did you apparate here? Your glasses are crooked."

"Oh." Harry said, and righted them quickly. He hadn't realized, and felt his face heating despite the fact that he knew he shouldn't be embarrassed over something so minor. "Have you seen Ronald yet?"

"Ronald?" Harry frowned.

"Yes, it makes his ears go red when I call him that." Malfoy smirked, "So I don't think I'll stop quite yet."

"Look," Harry whispered, stepping up closer to Malfoy so Molly wouldn't overhear as she pulled trays from the oven, "This is important, alright? Don't try and cause a fight."

"I wouldn't of dream of it." Malfoy said, and put his hand over his chest in mock offense. He smirked at Harry and said, "I'm just trying to throw him off his game so we'll win at Quidditch. He doesn't play as well when he's angry."

"Still have to resort to cheap tricks to win, eh Malfoy?" Ron asked loudly, strolling into the kitchen with an arm around Hermione.

"It's the Slytherin way, Weasel." Malfoy said, his nose angled towards the ceiling pompously, "But I could still beat you if I had my arms tied behind my back, no tricks necessary."

"Maybe, but only because you've got Ginny on your team. A professional player against all us normal blokes? Hardly seems fair to me." Harry said with a smirk, his gut unknitting as he took in the friendly edge to their bantering. "She could destroy all of us even on her own."

"Damn straight." Ginny said, and brushed past Harry, with George at her side, to take a seat at the table. Molly settled six trays on the table and immediately everyone was pulling up chairs to sit and eat. Arthur headed the table at one end, and Molly took the other, leaving Hermione and Ron sat at one end with Percy (who Harry hadn't noticed until right then) and Malfoy between George and Harry on the other.

There was silence besides the sound of spoons and forks clacking on plates and dishes being passed once they all got settled, and finally it got to be enough that Harry asked Hermione with a loud swallow, "How is Rosie doing in school?"

"Oh, she's a champ, really. Head of her class just after Scorpius. You should be very proud, Malfoy."

Harry knew she was turning the conversation to him on purpose, and Malfoy seemed increasingly uncomfortable as all eyes swiveled to him, but he cleared his throat to say softly, "He's a good kid, I couldn't ask for one better."

"You know what sort of career he wants?" Molly asked encouragingly, smiling at him politely.

"He changes his mind so often it's hard to tell. Right now he wants to be an artist, but he always seems to come back to wanting to be a baker, so who knows, really, what he'll decide."

"Rose said something about his cupcakes in a letter just last week." Hermione said with a grin, "They've been going to the kitchens on the weekends to cook with the house elves."

"Ha!" Arthur snorted, before he could stop himself, probably thinking

along the same vein of thought that Harry was. _If Lucius Malfoy could only see his grandson in the kitchens with the house elves. _Arthur coughed quickly to cover it, sensing Molly's glare from across the table, and said sheepishly, "Sorry, uh, lamb in the throat."

"It's cleared, then, isn't it?" She asked sharply.

"Yepp-uh- Yes, dear, it's gone now."

"Good. There had better not be anything else getting stuck, now." She warned, and turned back to Malfoy kindly, saying excitedly, "Does he get it from his mother, that talent he's got in the kitchen?"

"Actually, no." Malfoy said, looking awkward and toying with his fork on his plate, "He, uh, learned it from me."

"_You?!_" Arthur and Ron burst out in synch, as George bypassed questions to lean back in his chair in a fit of laughter. Harry was glad to see that Malfoy only _barely_ winced.

"George Weasley you will be polite or you will leave this table!" Molly snapped at her son, eyes narrowing, and George bit his lip and forced himself to shrink his laughs down to giggles, which he concealed unconvincingly as coughs, like his father had. Molly pursed her lips and said stiffly, "Lamb seems to be getting caught in everyone's throats today."

George snorted, but Molly didn't catch it, and Harry said quickly, "I didn't know you baked, Malfoy."

"I don't, really." Malfoy said, and it didn't take an expert to see he was uncomfortable, but Molly Weasley had trouble discerning it anyways.

"Oh?" She asked, tipping her head to the side, "How did it come about then?"

There was a pause before Malfoy admitted quietly, in a way that made Harry's heart clench, "I only started experimenting with it after Astoria died. I remembered that she had always wanted to teach him, because her mother used to bake with her when she was young, but she never got the opportunity before she passed. I didn't want Scorp to lose that experience, though, so I learned how to do it, and then I taught him. If she had lived long enough, I think she would have been proud of him."

"I'm so sorry, dear." Molly said, and Harry knew that if Malfoy was sitting in his place she would have put a hand over his. George wasn't laughing anymore, and looked rather embarrassed, and Ron didn't have a word to say. Arthur was looking pointedly away from his wife.

Malfoy shook himself and said with a slight smile, "It was years ago, I'm fine."

"I'm sure you miss her, though." Hermione said softly, her eyes round and glistening, "If I were to lose Ron..."

she had to stop herself at the thought to take a steadying breath then continued, "It must be hard, is all I'm saying. I can see that you loved her."

"She was my best friend." Malfoy said, and Harry pretended not to notice that he blinked rather hard to lose the shine in his eyes, "We were married because our parents wanted us to be, and that was it, but it's hard not to love someone like her, you know? Even if it wasn't ever romantic, she was my favorite person in the world, and waking up next to her was something I never thought I would miss, but I always do. I just-she was my best friend."

"I'm sorry, Draco." Hermione said, her face creasing with sadness. Ron shifted uncomfortably next to her, and Molly was blinking back tears as she stared at her husband and then at George, then to the clock that was missing a hand with his twins picture. Harry knew they were thinking of Fred. He was thinking of his own parents, and all that he had missed from not growing up with them. _Would they have taught him how to bake too? _

"How is Scorpius taking it?" Harry asked before he could think through his question. He couldn't tell if he was being insensitive or not, too caught up with trying to find similarities to himself in the child.

"He's doing better. She passed when he was two, so he doesn't remember much about her, but he's doing great. When it first happened, all he would do was ask for her, and look for her, and there were nights that he wouldn't stop crying for her, but I was the only one there and he _just_didn't_want_me_. I didn't think it would ever stop; didn't think he would ever stop looking for his mom, but one day he just seemed to understand it that she was gone, and he's been okay ever since. That's not to say it's not hard, or that we don't miss her, because we do, and that will never go away completely, it's just that it's gotten easier to bear her absence."

"I can't imagine." Hermione whispered, "If Ron were to die tomorrow-"

"How would I die tomorrow, all I'm doing is paperwork in the office?" Ron scoffed, and blinked quickly, "Can we stop with the depressing conversations now and try to smile a little? Merlin, you're all about to burst out crying on your dinners. Lets talk about something different-something positive-lets make fun of Malfoy's ugly jacket, at least, just stop with the sad stuff, I can't play Quidditch if I'm depressed."

"It's not an ugly jacket." Malfoy frowned, and Harry turned to look where a paisley purple jacket was hanging by the front door.

"It's hideous, mate." Ron snorted, finally beginning to relax. "You couldn't say anything to make me think otherwise."

"It was the last gift Astoria ever gave to me." Draco said, and Ron's face completely drained of color. Molly dropped her spoon into her soup, and Arthur Weasley's jaw unhinged itself to drop open. There was nothing but silence as they stared with wide eyes at Malfoy, and Harry was just about to groan when Malfoy's lips twitched and he said gleefully, "Just kidding."

"YOU ARE SUCH A BASTARD, MALFOY!" Ron shouted, but the relief was flooding his face as the table erupted in laughter, tension fizzling out as lighthearted conversation made its way around the table. Harry's heart was still beating in his chest wildly at the scare of thinking Ron had offended the blond, and the red-heads hands kept shaking with how relieved he was, so Harry knew he felt it too. Harry was ready to annihilate Malfoy at Quidditch for the joke.

Malfoy was a great conversationalist once they got him into softer topics, and Harry was surprised at how easily Malfoy could rattle off facts about old jazz singers to Molly, which was a talent that was as impressive as it was useless. Malfoy didn't seem to care, though, and soon they were all out in the backyard holding brooms (Malfoy was borrowing Bill's old one, and Harry took Charlies) and shaking hands, ready for a fierce game.

They played four rounds with little incident, Malfoy's team tied with Harry's, and only because Malfoy cheated on the last round and pulled Harry's broom to secure the snitch, telling him innocently, "We never decided to play by the rules, Potter."

Ginny had slapped him on the back with a smile, her eyes alight with pride, and Ron told her grumpily, "We never considered to play against cheaters."

"Why don't you complain to the ref, then, Weasel?" Malfoy asked with wide, innocent eyes. Harry felt the old urge to punch him surfacing. He wasn't sure how Malfoy could change between friend to enemy so quickly, but the blond certainly seemed to have a knack for it.

"Alright, fine." George said, his face hardening, "If Malfoy's team doesn't have to play by the rules, neither do we. No rules; whoever wins this round are the ultimate Quidditch champions-until the next time we play, at least. Ready?"

"Born ready." Harry and Malfoy said, glaring at one another. Harry couldn't tell if it was aggressive or not.

They took off into the air, wind whipping around Harry's head, and he and Malfoy searched avidly for the snitch, while looking back at each other every few seconds to make sure the other wasn't in reaching distance. Harry decided to get into the spirit a few minutes in, stealing the quaffle (They were only playing with one, and there were no bludgers; instead, Percy lounged in the grass and shot an occasional curse at one of them in its place. Harry was sure he had a bruise from a stinging charm that had hit his thigh in the first game.) away from Ginny to score on Hermione, who still hated being on a broom, but was getting more comfortable with the idea the more they played. Malfoy saw him the third time he did it and shouted angrily, "You're a seeker, Potter, not a chaser!"

"I thought we weren't playing by the rules, Malfoy?" Harry called back at him with a smirk, and the blond glared in his direction before he dodged a curse from Percy, who had now joined the game thanks to Ron's coercion, and was apparently firing hexes for Harry's team, claiming that he was "a bludger gone rogue". Harry admired his creativity and laughed uproariously when a hex hit Malfoy to turn his hair pink. It only stayed for a second before Malfoy fixed it and hit

Percy with a body bind and levitated him back into the grass. It was then that Harry went back to looking for the snitch, and tried to keep from focussing on the antics of the other players.

Malfoy saw it first, but Harry was hot on his tail as they raced for it, arms outstretched. Harry kicked the back of Malfoy's broom, and soon they were completely parallel, shoving and kicking to get ahead unsuccessfully. Harry hissed when Malfoy's knee jabbed the bruise from Percy's hex, and he retaliated by reaching over to grab the handle of Malfoy's broom, shaking it to try and throw him off course. Malfoy shoved him away, and snarled competitively, "Move, Potter, I was here first!"

"You move!" Harry challenged, and tried to shake Malfoy's broom again.

"Have a habit of grabbing other mens brooms, Potter, or am I just special?" Malfoy sneered, and Harry's face heated at the implication.

"Do you have a habit of riding other men's brooms, or was that something you only did with Krum?" Harry fired back, and sped ahead before he could feel guilty about it. He wasn't sure if he was allowed to know about that, much less talk about it.

Malfoy was back at his side in no time, and Harry was surprised to see how determined the blond had become, a hard look on his face that almost startled Harry, who realized very quickly that, no, he shouldn't have brought that up in what was supposed to be a friendly game. He considered letting Malfoy win, just to smooth it over, but suddenly wondered if the blond was just toying with him again, and sped up as much as he could-not that it helped, since Malfoy was just as fast as he was. He felt his fingers graze the snitch, but couldn't close a hand on it. Malfoy's thumb skimmed a wing. They both lurched forward for it, eyes locked, and it looked as if they both might secure it, but then the snitch zipped in the opposite direction, following Hermione's shrill cry of, "Accio snitch!"

Harry and Draco both pulled to a stop, breathing hard, as George complained about how catching the snitch that way wasn't fair, whether there were rules or not. Harry sighed, and turned to Malfoy, who he knew was still fuming, and said through his panting, "I shouldn't have said that about Krum. That wasn't fair."

"No," Malfoy agreed, his eyes narrowing, "It wasn't."

"Look, don't do that. Don't get all huffy and mad, you know I didn't mean it."

"You didn't mean it?" Malfoy snorted, "I find that hard to believe. You haven't like that I'm gay since you found out last year in McGonagall's office!"

"What? What are you talking about? Malfoy, I was surprised, not grossed out!" Harry rolled his eyes, "Learn to read body language you humungous git! I only said that thing about Krum because you made the joke about brooms, I wouldn't have said it if I thought it would piss you off!"

"Alright, fine, thats fair." Malfoy huffed, then glanced at Harry from the side to ask with a pink face, "You don't care I'm gay, then?"

Harry groaned, and told Malfoy with a sigh, "If you were that worried about what I thought you could have asked me outright, Malfoy. You haven't got to go goad me into getting angry with you in order to find out what I think. I say stupid things when I'm mad, it will never lead you anywhere good to rile me up. If you're going to be friends with me, that's something you ought to know."

"We're friends?" Malfoy asked, and this time he seemed surprised, and not unpleasantly.

"Do you think I would invite a stranger to play Quidditch and eat dinner at the burrow?"

"You didn't. Ginny did."

"Point is, I don't hate you." Harry said. _Why does he have to make everything so difficult?_

"Oh." Malfoy said, but it was clear he wanted Harry to say more, if only to stroke his ego.

Harry closed his eyes and counted to ten mentally before he said, "You're an infuriating git, but I don't hate you, and I wouldn't completely despise it if we were friends."

"You wouldn't?" Malfoy asked skeptically.

"No, I would." Harry said with a sly smile, "But I would only despise it a little. Chances are I would probably enjoy it most of the time, being your friend."

"Well..." Malfoy said thoughtfully, "Scorpius is friends with your son, so I guess I'll have no choice but to continue seeing you in the future, so I guess being friends won't kill me."

"Thanks for that, Malfoy." Harry shook his head in amusement. "Should we fly in now before George starts a fist fight with his sister?"

XXXXXXXXXX

****Authors Note:**** I'm not a huge fan of this chapter so I might change it later. Thanks for reading and reviewing, I really appreciate it!

6. Chapter 6

Harry hadn't seen Malfoy for almost two weeks after the Summer holiday started, and he was made busy with the kids, who had become much more difficult to handle now that they knew magic. Ginny had been traded to a new team and hadn't been able to see them since Hogwarts let out, so Harry was struck with relief when she showed up on his doorstep with an apologetic smile and a request to borrow their children for a couple days. Harry all but pushed them onto her, ignoring it when she laughed and asked him, "The great Harry Potter

can't handle a few kids?"

"He's not that great." Albus had rolled his eyes with a sly smile at his father, "He can't even make eggs the right way."

"You try working overnight as an auror and raising three teenagers, then tell me how important it is to make eggs properly." Harry said huffily, but mussed Albus's hair with a smile. Lily hugged him quickly before she left, and James gave his father a half-smile, and then the house was empty besides Harry.

He would have liked to say that he missed having the kids in the house, but in truth he was so relieved to have a moments silence that he hardly spared them a thought, collapsing onto the couch and flicking on the television with an open butterbeer. He ended up watching old cartoon reruns, and fell asleep without meaning to, his empty bottle sitting on its side on the carpet as he snored through the night and up to the next morning.

Once again, his alarm woke him, blaring from his bedroom. He barely heard it, being so far away, but was grateful for it nonetheless as it saved him from flooing into work late again. He may be Harry Potter, but he knew better than to try and get away with getting special treatment. He burst through the fireplace at the ministry at the same time Ron did, and his companion grinned, saying, "Ginny stopped by this morning. She's taking Rose and Hugo out with your lot to see a muggle aquarium. Hermione's gone with her, so I've got the house to myself if we finish work early enough. You know how long it's been since I've been the only one home?"

"Joys of having kids, mate." Harry grinned, and clapped him on the back. "You can always come over to mine, you know. I've been meaning to go over to Grimmuald place and finish cleaning it out, but I haven't got the time."

"You and that house." Ron sighed, shaking his head, "It's been a good twenty years and you've still barely stirred the dust. I don't see why you can't just use magic to get it clean."

"It's just nice to do some things the muggle way." Harry shrugged, not sure himself why he was so insistent on cleaning everything up by hand. Spells certainly would be easier. "You know what our assignment is?"

"We're on patrols in Diagon." Ron said, "Not as exciting as an actual case, but it sure beats paperwork, doesn't it?"

"Anything beats paperwork." Harry chuckled, and they stepped distractedly into the lift to the third floor to retrieve their badges from the office and to sign into work. Once they got them and had exchanged hellos with Kingsley and Robards they flooed directly into Diagon, bursting through George's fireplace with enough force that Ron nearly crashed into a display case.

"Knew you'd be coming through there any day now." George frowned at them as he headed down the stairs of his shop with a box of skiving snackboxes.

"What have you done to the floo?" Ron accused with a dark look on his face, soot smeared across his forehead and over the bridge of his

nose.

"Just testing a product, that's all. It's meant to spit unwanted visitors a good three feet, but so far it only sends them two and a half."

"Genius, really, but do you mind warning us next time you tamper with it?" Harry asked with a half-smile. George only winked, which Ron pointed out wasn't an answer, but he didn't make to say anything else. "Come on, Harry, lets get to work."

They roamed the streets for nearly four hours without doing anything but giving warnings, and a few autographs to kids that recognized them (though that part embarrassed them as much as it had when they were younger). They skived off for a half hour to duck into a new Quidditch supply store and to grab ice cream, but they weren't going to put it in that afternoons report if they could help it, and were back to George's shop before they knew it. George wasn't anywhere to be seen, though, despite the crowd of school-age kids and parents milling about the store. There was a line at the unmanned register that was growing by the minute, and the woman heading it looked ready to explode her face was so red with indignation. Ron looked to Harry and said quickly, "I'll handle the line, you go and find George."

"Right." Harry nodded as Ron slipped behind the counter, not waiting for a response. If the woman at the front noticed that Ron had auror robes and didn't work there she didn't say anything.

"George!" Harry called, wading through a group of kids to get towards the back room, a thin ray of light shining under the heavy black curtain that separated it from the rest of the store. He pushed into the room and stopped short. George was standing at his work desk with a look of glee, chatting with Scorpius Malfoy in low tones. They both looked up when Harry arrived.

"There you are!" George cried in relief, "Thank Merlin, I've been waiting for hours!"

"What is Scorpius Malfoy doing back here? Where is his father?"

"Went off to fetch me a headache potion, bless him. Told him I'd show Scorp here some new products while he went. It's been a while, though. Reckon he got lost in the chaos of the shop?"

"It's not impossible. Have you tried shouting something rude about Hufflepuff into the crowd? He'll come running." Harry suggested with a shrug, and tried to ignore the light in both Scorpius and George's eyes as they looked him over. "Am I missing something?"

"No, nothing." George said, a smirk resting on his face as he exchanged a look with Scorpius, who looked twice as smug as his companion. "It's just that its cute to see you worrying over Malfoy like that."

"What? I'm not worrying over Malfoy." Harry scoffed, crossing his arms stubbornly. "We are barely even friends."

"Dad doesn't think so." Scorpius said, the little smile stretching

wider, "He likes you quite a bit."

"Li-likes me?" Harry asked, a familiar flutter starting up in his stomach.

"He'd be mortified if you knew, but he thinks you're really cute." Scorpius shrugged, as if it were the most casual thing in the world. It wasn't, though, and Harry's head was spinning so quickly he feared he would lose his balance. Malfoy thought he was cute? But Harry wasn't gay. He certainly didn't think _Malfoy _was cute. Why would Scorpius tell him that? Was he joking? But why did Harry feel disappointed at thinking it was a joke, then? What did that mean? Did Malfoy actually think he was cute? Fuck, what was he going to say the next time he saw him?

"There's Malfoy!" George called with a grin, and Harry spotted his white-blond head bobbing through the crowd towards them. He did exactly the thing he didn't want to do; he ran. Well, walked quickly was more accurate, but he turned tail all the same, grabbing Ron by the collar and dragging him out of the store without a word of explanation. He resolved to avoid Malfoy for the rest of the Summer, and refused to tell Ron what had him so spooked. He could manage to avoid Malfoy without being rude, right? He just didn't want to give him the wrong impression, that was all. He was trying to spare Malfoy's feelings by seeing him less. But how come the idea of not seeing Malfoy made Harry's heart hurt so much? No, it would be best if he stopped seeing Malfoy from now on.

7. Chapter 7

When he wasn't seeing Malfoy, he realized how much he missed him. He turned down four separate trips to the burrow alone to be sure he wouldn't see him there and be forced to awkwardly skirt around the fact that Malfoy liked him, and each time he desperately wished he was there, talking and laughing with the blond like they had been before.

He didn't want to think about Malfoy liking him. He didn't like the way his stomach flipped or the way his mind zeroed in on Malfoy's lips, which he had memorized the shape of despite trying his hardest not to. George already reminded him enough times about the crush when he'd go to the joke shop, and it was giving him anxiety every time he left the house, praying that he wouldn't see Malfoy out and about when he was picking up groceries. All three of his kids had picked up on his nervousness, but he refused to tell any of them what he was so worried about. Hermione was ultimately the one who figured it out, while they picked up their kids' books a week before school was set to start again.

They had seen Malfoy an aisle over, and Hermione had waved to him, but not before Harry had ducked down behind a shelf, looking between a crack in the books to see if Malfoy had spotted them. He had. He was walking towards them with a smile, and Harry realized he had only seen Hermione, so he did the only thing he could think to do to avoid the horrifyingly awkward explanation for his hiding, and he dropped to his knees, crawling away as quickly as he could. Hermione nearly blew his cover when he was halfway down the row, and shouted in alarm, confusion coloring her tone, "Harry!"

He ignored her, and made it to the safety of the next row just as Malfoy stopped in front of Hermione to chat. He nearly expected her to tell Malfoy he was there as well, but she was far more perceptive than Harry liked to give her credit for, and didn't say a word about Harry as far as he could tell. He stayed crouched behind a box of clearance books until Malfoy had left the store just to be safe, and his knees hurt when he stood up, reminding him that he ought to get back into shape before it got worse.

Hermione didn't speak to him for ten minutes after he met up with her again, and Harry was almost sure she was about to yell at him when she said sternly, "That was a terrible thing to do Harry James Potter."

"I-"

"I'm not sure what you're playing at here, but if you don't stop avoiding him I will stupefy you and drop you on his doorstep to talk it out. Just because you found out he likes you-"

"Wait a minute, how do you know about that?"

"It's obvious, Harry, honestly." Hermione huffed, "You have three days before dinner at the burrow, so I suggest you figure yourself out very quickly because you are NOT cancelling this time."

"But Hermione-"

"No, Harry. No buts. This hiding from your feelings is unhealthy, and what's more is you're pushing Draco away and he's got no idea why. It's really starting to hurt his feelings, Harry, and Ron and I can't tell him why you've been so averse to seeing him, so he feels he's done something wrong to scare you off." Hermione said sharply, her fists balled on her hips. "You need to talk to him, and if you don't want to be in a relationship that's fine, but don't treat him like he's an inconvenience or you'll ruin everything."

"You think he'll understand?" Harry asked nervously, wringing his hands together guiltily, "That I don't want to date him, that is?"

"He is more like to be upset you haven't spoken to him in months, really. Just talk to him, Harry, it can't be that hard."

It was, though. Harry still hadn't decided how he felt about Malfoy, and he wasn't sure what would come out of his mouth if he saw him.

XXXXXXXXXX

It was something very stupid was what it was. He had arrived at the burrow with Albus, James, and Lily, and had immediately locked himself in the bathroom at seeing Malfoy by the fireplace with Scorpius. He felt like he had swallowed a mouthful of pixies, and he wanted to be sick, but he knew Hermione would come looking for him if he stayed hidden for too long, and he forced himself out of the bathroom before he could convince himself to stay put. He walked directly into Malfoy, tripping over his own feet, and blurted helplessly, "Shit, sorry, it's just that I have a habit of falling for you."

He wanted to die. He wanted the floor to open up and swallow him-or to swallow Malfoy, who he blamed for being put in such an awkward situation. It would make things easier if Malfoy were to suddenly disappear, that was for sure, but he wasn't entirely sure he wouldn't miss him. Merlin, he was a mess. Malfoy just stood there, staring at him with a creased forehead and a partially opened mouth.

Harry finally found his words and pulled out of Malfoy's arms to say, coughing into his fist, "Sorry, that came out wrong. I meant to say that I fall a lot, and, uh, yeah, that's it."

"Yes," Malfoy said, a slight smirk lifting on his lips, "You do seem to fall a lot. Didn't you fall in a book store just a few days ago? I could have sworn I saw you crawling away from the scene."

_Fuck. _Malfoy had seen that. Harry felt his blood go frozen in his veins and he couldn't look away from Malfoy or even begin to explain himself, because he wasn't sure why he had done that and he didn't think he could make it make any sense to Malfoy. An apology fizzled on his tongue, seeing the sharp pain in Malfoy's eyes that Hermione had warned him about, but Malfoy had already started talking, his smile gone, to say gently, "If you didn't want to see me I would have understood, you know. You could have just _told_ me that you didn't want me around."

"No, Malfoy, that's not-"

"You don't have to explain yourself, I'm rather good at reading signs, Potter." Malfoy sighed, and his voice was so soft and vulnerable that Harry's heart shattered in his chest but he couldn't make himself say anything because he s_till _couldn't figure out what he was supposed to say. He didn't miss it, though, that he had called him _Potter _and not _Harry_. Fuck, he had ruined everything, and he was still standing there like an _idiot_ just _staring_ at Malfoy who looked like he was trying increasingly hard to look like he wasn't effected by what Harry had done. He was failing, though. Draco _was _hurt by Harry's ignoring him, and they could both tell, but neither knew how to say anything that would close the wound. Draco swallowed and looked at the floor, saying gently, "I won't bother you anymore."

Draco walked away back to the kitchen, and Harry stayed in the hall outside the bathroom, staring after him with words caught in his throat. He didn't know what the words were though, and he didn't know if he wanted to, so he swallowed them, and nervously made his way to the sitting room, where all the Weasley's were now gathered. Draco and Hermione were out of sight, but he tried not to let it bother him too much. He would find Malfoy later and talk to him when he didn't have a lump in his throat and the back of his eyes didn't sting.

They were talking about Quidditch, and the kids were out in the backyard practicing their skills with Oliver Wood-who had started dating Ginny when they met at a training camp for their respective teams. Ginny had always been so brave when it came to going after what she wanted. Harry wished he could have been like that, so he could tell Malfoy that he liked him without a struggle and-it hit him like a bludger. He liked Malfoy. He liked Malfoy and he wanted to tell him, and those were the words he had swallowed in the hall, and

that was why he was avoiding him so carefully. He hadn't known what he was feeling till right then, but suddenly his heart was knocking in his ribs and his face felt flushed and he hadn't the slightest idea how to make it up to the blond, but he was determined that he would. _He liked Malfoy. _

XXXXXXXXXX

It was harder to talk to Malfoy than Harry had anticipated, as the blond had now taken up the role of avoiding the other, and was dead set on not being anywhere near Harry. He didn't play Quidditch when offered, he had been so set against sitting near Harry that he had actually wedged himself between Ron and Hermione-which would have been funny if Harry hadn't noticed how puffy and red Malfoy's eyes looked-and he absolutely refused to look in Harry's direction. Even Scorpius seemed annoyed with Harry, and though he sat next to him at the elongated table in the kitchen, he didn't say a word to him. Nobody else seemed to sense the tension between them besides Hermione, who kept a hand on Malfoy's knee through the entire meal that had Ron looking concerned and horrified in turn when he noticed. Molly noticed Malfoy's dejected expression early on, and asked him in alarm, making everything more awkward, "Draco, dear, did something happen? You look like you've been crying, love."

"It's only allergies Mrs. Weasley." Draco assured her with a false smile. Harry pretended he didn't notice Scorpius glaring daggers at him.

"Yes," She mused with a frown, "It's about that season, isn't it?"

Dinner went down much of that same vein, with Draco giving short answers to questions, and Harry acting as if he had no idea what had the blond looking so upset. He didn't think it would be wise to draw attention to it. They were nearly finished when Ron had had enough of Hermione's and Malfoy's closeness and said sharply, "I don't know about how you lot feel, but if a certain Gryffindor doesn't move her hands away from another man's nether regions, a ferret will lose its bollocks."

Ginny and Hermione both clapped their hands down on top of the table, one far more red-faced than the other, and Oliver Wood looked horrifyingly red in alarm, where Malfoy looked startled and confused. Molly frowned and said, "Just what is going on here, then?"

"Just a bit of fondling under the table, mum, but don't worry, I'm sure it was a mistake, right Hermione?"

Ginny looked relieved, and Hermione's mouth popped open in shock as she cried, "Ronald! That's not what-"

"You think I wouldn't notice? I'm sitting literally right beside you, it was sort of hard to miss!"

"Weasley that's not-" Draco started, but Ron tore his wand out and pointed it directly at Draco's jugular, a silent warning that he would murder him if he said another word. Hermione's hands clapped over her mouth in horror, her eyes filled with tears.

"If you think I would do that to you-and in front of the kids? Ron, I

would never-

"Shut up." Ron growled, "And here I was, thinking Malfoy was as bent as circle while you felt him up under the table! I should have known that was false as soon as he said it-everyone knows how Fenrir Grayback used to feel him up that same way! Used imperius to get Malfoy to do what he wanted. To think he would still be gay after that, who was he kidding?"

"Dad?" Scorpius asked, a look of devastation on his face. Harry's heart had collapsed into his chest and he felt sick. He hadn't known that, but there was no questioning the validity of Rons accusation when he got a look at Draco's face. He looked as if his entire world had just fallen apart in front of him.

"RON!" Hermione screamed, and Harry had never seen her look so upset before.

"Bombarda!" Draco snarled, without touching his wand, and Ron and his chair flew back into the china cabinet, plates and glass breaking across the floor. "Come on, Scorpius, we're leaving."

"Yeah, run, then, Malfoy, just like you've always been known to do!" Ron shouted after him, without moving from the floor. Hermione was leading the kids out of the room with Molly, tears streaming down her face as Harry stood, trying to catch Malfoy's eye. Ron continued shouting, tears of his own leaving streaks along his cheeks, "Maybe we'll get lucky and you'll go the same way your wife did!"

Ron didn't even have a chance to brace himself. Harry didn't know where it had come from, but a protective surge had flared in his chest, and he was suddenly spitting a curse he had promised himself he would never use, a clear and crisp "Crucio!" flying from his mouth before he knew what he had said.

He hadn't meant to do it, but it didn't matter. Ron's auror training had kicked in, and he had thrown up a shield charm, deflecting the spell towards Draco-Only it didn't hit Draco. It hit Scorpius.

XXXXXXXXXX

**Authors Note: **Oh shit, now it's going down. Lol you thought this was going to be a lighthearted love story, didn't you? Things are really abot to take a turn now. Can you feel that tension?

End
file.